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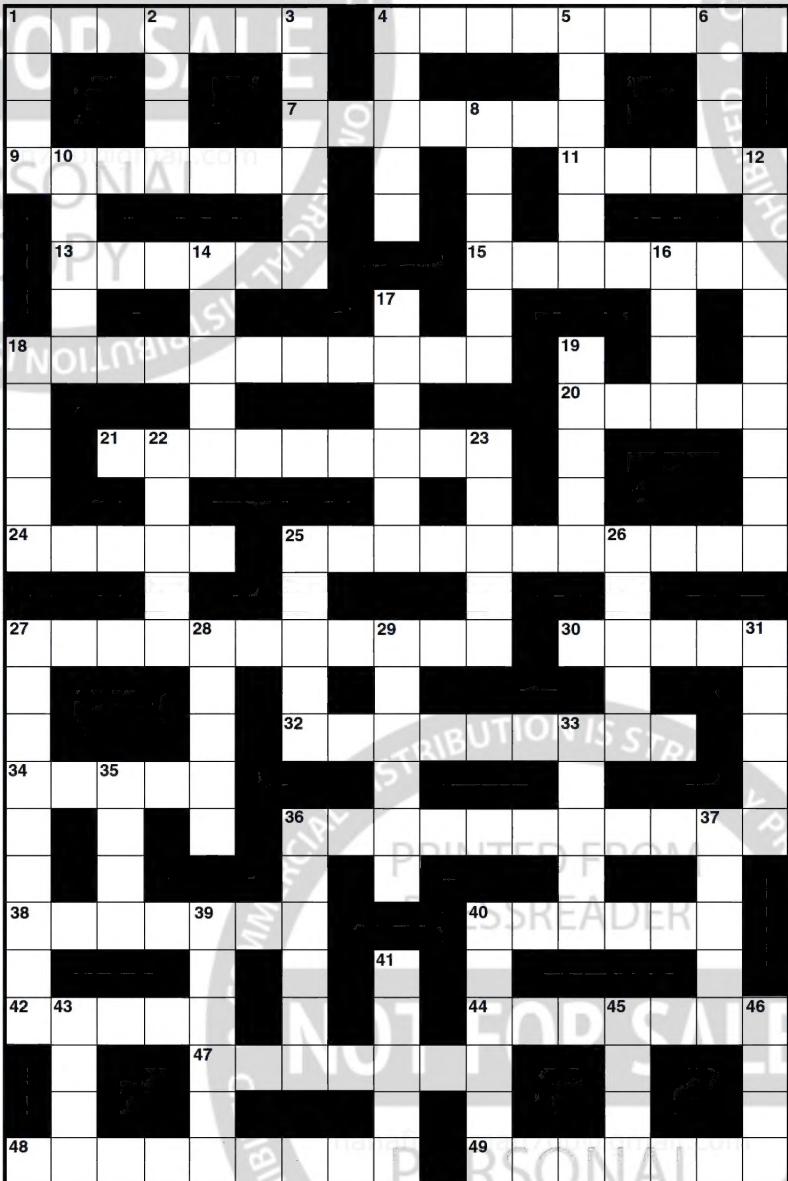
SEND your answers, name and address to: Giant Soccerword, Daily Star Sports Desk, 10 Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6EN. Entries by first post Friday. First correct one drawn will receive £25. Last week's winner was Mr D Stradling, of Peterlee, Co. Durham.

ACROSS

- Frank centre back who won a World Cup winners medal with France in 1998 (7)
- Howard forward whose clubs included Bristol City and Gillingham, capped once by Wales in 1985 (9)
- Everton and England midfielder or defender previously with Manchester United (7)
- Roy Port Vale defender who made a club record 761 League appearances 1950-72 (7)
- David Carlisle's former Liverpool defender (5)
- Cheltenham and Holland forward (6)
- W.H.U. Stadium, home of East Fife (7)
- WHU and ex-England under-21 striker (7,4)
- Andy England under-21 defender previously with Chelsea, Bradford and Colchester, who joined Brentford in 2004 (5)
- Goalkeeper later with Coventry, who made 302 League appearances for Millwall 1967-75 (5,4)
- John Rangers and Scotland defender who managed the club 1978-83 (5)
- Home of Sheffield United (7,4)
- Danny England under-21 forward previously with Everton, who joined Bradford from Sheffield United in 2005 (11)
- David forward previously with Blackpool, Burnley and Preston North End, who joined Oldham in 2000 (5)
- The nickname of Blackpool (9)
- Defender or midfielder whose clubs included Ayr, Liverpool and Sheffield Wednesday, capped 27 times by Scotland 1984-91 (5)
- Winners of the Football League Cup in 1969 while in Division Three (7,4)
- John Arsenal and West Ham striker capped once by England 1969-71 (7)
- Inter Milan's on-loan Chelsea and Argentina striker (6)
- Gunnar Norway defender who joined Leeds from Oldham in 1996 (5)
- See 45 down
- United, club who replaced Clydebank as members of the Scottish League in 2002 (7)
- Eire forward who was a Brighton substitute in the 1983 FA Cup Final (5,4)
- Nathan Port Vale's former St Johnstone and Plymouth player (7)

DOWN

- Sheffield Wednesday manager (4)
- Heine Holland midfielder who joined Middlesbrough from Twente Enschede in 1981 (4)
- Liverpool and Eire defender (6)
- Srnicek, 12 down's former Czech Republic goalkeeper (5)
- Trevor England defender who became Bradford City player-manager in 1982 (6)
- Matthew QPR's former Arsenal and England under-21 defender (4)
- Kevin Charlton Athletic and Jamaica forward (6)
- Italian club who won the European Cup Winners Cup in 1993 (5)
- United, European Fairs Cup winners in 1969 (9)
- England midfielder also with Blackburn, who rejoined Leeds United from 12 down in 1998 (5)
- Middlesbrough Town manager (4)
- Brazilian midfielder who joined Middlesbrough from Celta Vigo in 2003 (6)
- Sammy wing half whose clubs included Watford and Norwich who managed Wolves 1976-78 (5)
- Eike Germany goalkeeper who joined Manchester City from VfB Stuttgart in 1995 (5)
- Liverpool and Spain goalkeeper (5)
- Crewe Alexandra manager (5)
- Aston Villa and Czech Republic striker (5)
- Road, home of Colchester United (5)
- John midfielder whose clubs included



Cup

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Sunderland, Swansea and Wycombe, capped twice by Wales in 1995 (9)

28. Hull City's on-loan

Birmingham City and

England defender (5)

29. Stefano Italy mid-

fielder who joined Derby

from AC Milan in 1997 (6)

31. Kenny defender who

won a European Cup

winners medal with

Aston Villa (5)

33. Taylor, once capped

England forward who

won FA Cup winners

medals with 12 down in

1951 and 1952 (5)

35. Danny Blackpool

defender (4)

36. David player capped

four times by England,

who won a European

Cup winners medal with

Manchester United in

1968 (6)

37. England goalkeeper who

won League Cup winners

medals with Nottingham

Forest and Norwich (5)

39. Eire defender who has

managed Leeds United

and Aston Villa (15)

40. Bobby full back who

won FA Cup winners'

medal with Aston Villa in

1957 (4)

medals with 12 down in

1951, 1952 and 1955 (6)

41. Inter Milan's former

Manchester United and

Chelsea midfielder (5)

43. Haan, Ajax midfiel

der who played for Holland

in two World Cup finals

(4)

45. and 44 across. Bradford

City striker whose previous

clubs include Hull,

Aberdeen and

Middlesbrough (4,7)

46. Nigel goalkeeper who

won an FA Cup winners'

medal with Aston Villa in

1957 (4)

57. Terry Cooper

48. Peter Taylor

39. Jimmy Armfield

1. Trevor Francis

3. David

2. John O'Shea

4. Paul Gascoigne

5. Michael

1. John Hartson

2. Steve Bruce

3. Alan Shearer

4. Robbie Keane

5. Gary Lineker

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GONE FISHIN'

with RICHARD LEE

Grant's chubby checker

COULD this be a photograph of Britain's first ever 10lb chub?

That's the debate sweeping the angling world following the capture of a 10lb 8oz specimen from a secret Derbyshire gravel pit.

It fell to the rod of forklift driver Grant Dunn, 23, and if the weighing process and scales are verified, it will smash the existing chub size record of 8lb 14oz.

Grant, of Swadlincote, said: "The lake is a private water I've fished with my dad for a few years now – we're just about the only ones allowed on there."

Huge

"Ten years ago about a dozen were stocked to 5lb. Some have grown huge."

"I just couldn't believe it when we lifted the scales up and the needle went past 10 pounds."

TV star Matt Hayes, one of the country's top chub anglers, said: "Stillwater chub are notoriously hard to catch."

"Grant did very well to put this fish on the bank."



IT'S HEAVY: Grant and the chub

QUICKBITES

THE River Trent has produced one of its biggest ever barbel in the shape of a 15lb 6oz specimen. Bricklayer Richard Lightning struck with a legered home-made boilie.

A THREE-DAY session on a Midlands stillwater produced just one bite but what a fish it was for Michael Milton when he slipped the net under a 15lb 15oz bream. The Leicestershire angler used feeder-fished maggots as bait.

A SHOCK 8lb eel was the reward for Jason Burgin during a pike session on Woodsetts Quarry Pond, Nottinghamshire. A mackerel tail proved the bait for the South Yorkshire carer.



IN a double record-breaking week, Britain's barbel best has been banked at 21lb 3oz.

The beauty, known as The Traveller, was landed from the Great Ouse near Bedford by regular Grahame King, of Watford. It's the third time he has set a British record with the same barbel.

He said: "I didn't set out to catch it again. I was in a swim that hadn't produced for three months."

HOTSPOTS

Larford Fishery, Stourport, Worcestershire: Match Pool for plenty of ton-plus nets of F1 carp.

River Weaver, Winsford, Cheshire: Bream bags over 30lb on groundbait feeder.

Cudmore, Whitmore, Staffs: Chub nets to 100lb on maggot with either feeder or pole.

River Nene, Peterborough: In good form for roach bags. Try groundbait and maggot.

SHEFFIELD policeman David Preston copped a record catfish in Spain. The 172lb fish, caught with a hookbait, was a new best for that part of the River Ebro.

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Mature Aunty	0173
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Masturbation	0175
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THE ASHES: Glenn's warning

MAC OUT TO MAKE US HURT

OPENING BLOW:
Glenn McGrath
celebrates
after Strauss
is caught
by Mike
Hussey

GLENN MCGRATH has vowed to dish out more painful lessons to England and insisted Australia will let nothing stand in the way of regaining the Ashes.

Fast bowler McGrath believes England will have to get used to being on the receiving end of an Aussie onslaught throughout the entire series.

McGrath was the main destroyer on day two at the Gabba, ripping our openers Andrew Strauss and

from MARTIN ROGERS
in Brisbane

Alastair Cook with successive balls after his team-mates had piled on a massive 602-9 declared.

And he insists the first Test will only be the start of England's troubles with his team determined to gain revenge for their defeat last year.

He said: "We don't want to take it easy. We want to get out there, nail it and show them why we are the best team in the world."

"We just want to drive it home now. You can never write off our guys but we have the momentum now and the confidence is with us."

"If we go 1-0 up at home, it is not too often that we lose the series."

England ended the day on 53-3, still a massive 549 runs behind and needing a remarkable revival to avoid a thumping defeat.

In the final session, the tourists' batsmen had to cope with a fired-up bowling attack, with McGrath, Brett Lee and Stuart Clark all in full flow.

Lee suffered a cut to his left leg when he ran into Mike Hussey as the pair tried to catch Strauss' skied pull shot, although Hussey somehow held on.

From the next ball, Cook edged McGrath to Shane Warne at slip and Australia were looking unstoppable.

Survive

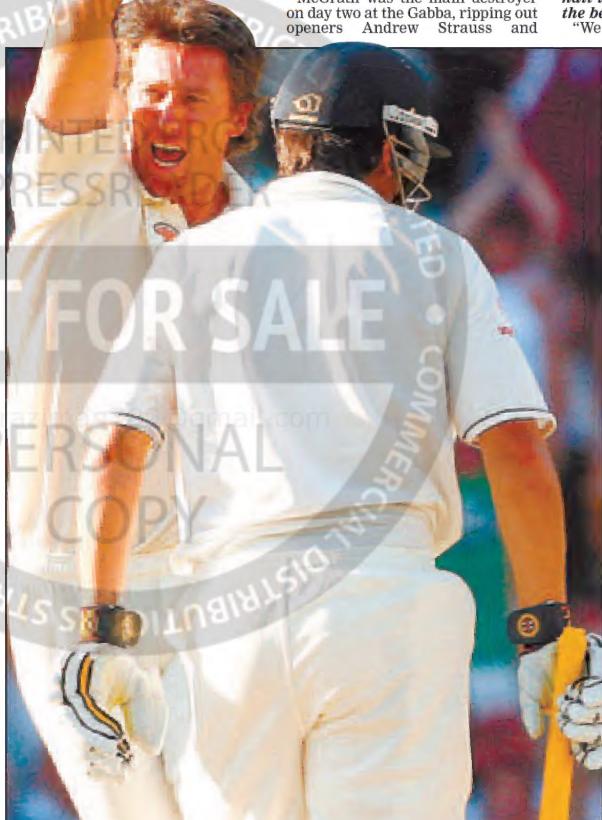
Paul Collingwood went soon after, caught behind off Clark, leaving Ian Bell and Kevin Pietersen to survive until the close.

Earlier, Ricky Ponting continued to plunder more runs, moving on to 196 before coming unstuck against Matthew Hoggard.

But England were ground down by the tail, Lee and Clark swiping away, helped by dropped catches from Cook and James Anderson.

Andrew Flintoff was the pick of the England bowlers with four wickets but did not receive enough back-up from the rest of the attack.

Anderson and Steve Harmison bore the brunt of the aggressive Aussie batting performance and face an uphill battle to restore their confidence.



Read our exclusive close of play report
every morning at www.dailystar.co.uk

as Flintoff shows faith



Freddie backs battered mate

FREDDIE FLINTOFF has backed Steve Harmison to recover from his nightmare Ashes start and find the form that won England the urn.

Flintoff has come under fire Down Under after managing just 1-123 in Australia's first innings in Brisbane and bowling a series of embarrassing wides.

But Flintoff insisted he will keep faith with the man who tormented the Aussies on home soil 14 months ago and played a key role in the side's Ashes triumph.

The captain, who had the best bowling figures of 4-

■ by MARTIN ROGERS

99, said: "I think it's fair to say Steve has not been at his best in this game. He would be the first to admit that but it is not from a lack of trying or effort.

"He is giving everything he has got but he has struggled a bit for rhythm in this game.

"There was an upturn later on, he did get better and he is going to work hard to get his bowling right.

"We have got people who can work with him but Steve knows when he is doing well himself. He is searching for the rhythm a bit at the moment."

Harmison has regularly suffered from homesick-

ness in the past and his mauling at the hands of the Aussie batsmen will have done nothing for his state of mind.

However, the Durham pace ace told how his problems with touring are not the cause of his wayward bowling.

Harmison said: "I quite like the fact that people throw that one at me because I love my kids and I love my family.

"I am a very family-oriented person.

"That is what it is about but I don't miss home as much as people think I do."

Grief

Australia, though, feel Harmison can become an ongoing weak link in the England bowling attack and will look to cause him more grief.

And despite Harmison's comments, he admitted in a recent magazine interview that he does not enjoy leaving his native North-East.

He said: "When I am away from home I miss my family, my mates, my telly.

"I miss just being a normal person. Even when you are at home playing for England, you are not actually at home.

"It can be hard on the players. The mental side of it is very demanding."

Lewis has Tiger in tank

LEWIS HAMILTON is reaching for the stars after yesterday being named the first black driver in Formula One history by McLaren-Mercedes.

And the 21-year-old will be in top company next season, driving alongside Spain's double world champion Fernando Alonso, who has switched from Renault.

Stevengate-born Hamilton, whose grandparents emigrated from the West Indies, was just 12 when he first attracted the attention of McLaren team boss Ron Dennis.

He marched up to him at an awards ceremony in London and said: "I'm Lewis Hamilton and I just want you to know that I'd like to drive your car one day."

Dennis was impressed enough to enrol him in McLaren's development programme a year later and has nurtured his career ever since.

Beat

Hamilton has seen off another Spaniard, Pedro de la Rosa, for the right to partner Alonso and become the third Brit on the grid alongside David Coulthard and Jenson Button.

Hamilton, who beat Nelson Piquet Jr – son of former F1 world champion Nelson Piquet – to the GP2 title in September, can hardly wait.

■ by JAMES MURRAY

saying: "It's a dream come true.

"To be racing in Formula One with McLaren has been the ultimate goal for me since I was very young.

"This opportunity is a fantastic way to end what has been the best year for me."

Already hailed as F1's answer to Tiger Woods, Hamilton added: "The way I see it, my colour is an advantage in that it's something people talk about.

"But the bottom line is that it is clearly not why I'm in this position."

GEARING UP:
McLaren's Lewis Hamilton can't wait to make history



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BRISBANE SCOREBOARD

Overnight: Australia 346-3	
(Ponting 137no, Hussey 63no)	
Australia 1st innings cont	
Langer 6, Bell 10, Harmison 5, 82	
Haynes 4, Collingwood 1, Flintoff 21	
Ponting lbw b Hoggard... 196	
Martyn c Collingwood b Giles... 29	
Hussey b Flintoff... 86	
Clarke c Hoggard b Anderson... 56	
Gilligan lbw b Hoggard... 17	
Warne c Jones b Harmison... 43	
Lee not out... 43	
Clark b Flintoff... 39	
McGraff not out... 8	
Extras b Hoggard... 25	
Total 9 wkt dec (155 overs)... 602	
Fall 1-79, 2-141, 3-195, 4-407	
5-467, 6-467, 7-500, 8-529, 9-578	
Bowling: Harmison 30-4-123-1.	
Hoggard 31-5-98-2, Anderson 29-6-	
141-1, Flintoff 30-4-99-4, Giles 25-2-	
91-1, Bell 1-12-0, Pietersen 9-1,	
25-0.	
Match referee: J. Crows (New Zealand).	
Second Test: Adelaide (Dec 1-5).	
Third Test: Perth (Dec 14-18).	
Fourth Test: Melbourne (Dec 26-30).	
Final Test: Sydney (Jan 2-6).	

MARTIN RICHARDS
in Sydney

FORMER GB forward Ray French says the Lions lost a golden chance to make today's Tri-Nations final because they lacked creative half-backs and good centres.

And French, the BBC's rugby league voice, has caused another stir by claiming that the Australian pack - who face New Zealand in the final - is the worst he has seen in 40 years.

"The Aussie pack has no ball players, they play one-out football and don't dominate like they did in the past," said French.

"GB had the measure of them but we didn't have the half-backs to create scoring chances or a good kicking game to build pressure."

Henry Ratt-led

GRAHAM HENRY has promised to "sort out" the New Zealand journalist who dismissed Wales as the "village idiots" of rugby.

The New Zealand Herald's Chris Rattue kicked up a storm when he laid into the standard of Welsh rugby.

It is 53 years since Wales last beat New Zealand and Rattue wrote: "It's pointless going on about the great history of All Black and Welsh rugby because there isn't one.

Uproar

"If rugby between New Zealand and Wales was a boxing contest, they would have stopped it many rounds ago and revoked the Welsh licence."

"Let's face it, Wales are rubbish. They are the village idiots of rugby union."

The article has caused uproar in Wales and Henry, who coached the side

■ by IAIN STEWART

between 1998 and 2002, said: "I hope the Welsh people realise those comments are not representative of us. I'm very embarrassed by the article in the paper. I was very annoyed and angry, I still am, and I'm going to sort the fellow out when I get home."

"There's 100 years of history between New Zealand and Wales and the two teams are very close in a rugby sense."

"Steve Hansen (All Blacks assistant coach) and I have both spent time here and thoroughly enjoyed those times."

WALES: Morgan; M Jones, Shanklin, Parker, S Williams; S Jones (capt), Peel; D Jones, R Thomas, A Jones, Gough, Evans, J Thomas, M Williams, R Jones.

NEW ZEALAND: Taulana; Gear, Smith, McLean, Tait, Carter, Kelleher; Tialata, Oliver, Hayman, Robinson, Williams, Collins, McCaw (capt), So'oalo.

Referee: Dave Pearson (England).

ENGLAND v SOUTH AFRICA:

ANDY



CALL TO ARMS:
Andy Robinson
(right) and Peter
Richards in training

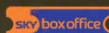
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Robbo fights for his job

MUST RAISE GAME

ANDY ROBINSON goes in to today's Springboks rematch knowing defeat will almost certainly spell the end of his England coaching career.

Robinson's side have coughed and spluttered their way through the autumn international series and are short of confidence and ideas.

Despite ending their dismal losing sequence last weekend with an escape act worthy of Houdini, doubts remain about Robinson's ability to take the team forward.

Blow

The stench of a first-ever home defeat to Argentina still lingers and only a complete performance against Jake White's depleted team will blow it away.

Robinson has remained unflappable under the intense scrutiny of the past four weeks and he insists he is not looking past today's clash.

He said: "I have honest, open and frank discussions with the RFU regularly and that's what working together is all about.

"I've never hidden away from anything and I've always been up front with the

■ by SAM PETERS

chief executive and the management board.

"We've got nothing to hide and we've got an exciting Test match against South Africa and that should be the focus.

"It's not about me, it's about the England team and how they perform."

Calls for Robinson's head have come from a number of highly-respected figures, including World Cup-winning captain Martin Johnson.

The RFU management team will review Robinson's position and the performance of the whole team early next month.

Robinson remains upbeat about his role, despite losing 12 of his 21 games in charge since taking over in 2004.

He said: "You make sacrifices to your family and to your clubs but being part of the England set-up means you are prepared to make those sacrifices.

"I'm just enjoying working with the team management and a group of players who I think have been exceptional.

"The team stuck together last week and rallied around Martin Corry and came back and won the match." Gale force winds are predicted around Twickenham today with gusts of up to 70mph expected in the south.

Robinson, who has made four changes to his starting line-up, is confident that Charlie Hodgson's replacement at fly-half, Andy Goode, will be up to the challenge.

Cope

He said: "The players have to be able to play in the dry and the wet."

"We have the armoury to cope with difficult conditions."

Captain Corry is under almost as much pressure as his beleaguered coach.

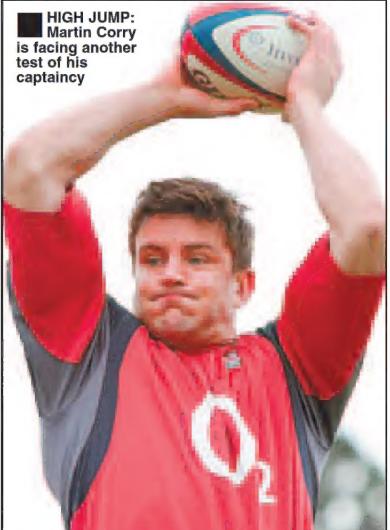
His position was undermined by elite rugby director Rob Andrew criticising the team's leadership after the Pumas debacle.

ENGLAND: Lewsey; Cueto, Tait, Noon, Cohen; Goode, Richards; Vickery, Mears, White, Palmer, Jones, Worsley, Sanderson, Corry (capt).

SAFARI: SPRINGBOKS: Steyn; Ndungane, Olivier, De Villiers, Habana; Pretorius, Januarie; Van der Linde, Smit (capt), Botha, Ackermann, Muller, Floors, Smith, Rossouw.

Referee: Alan Lewis (Ireland).

HIGH JUMP:
Martin Corry
is facing another
test of his
captaincy



I'M BOSS: Southgate owes it all to O'Neill

Mart's call opened up a Gate-way

■ by IAN MURTAGH

O'Neill chosen Boro ahead of Villa.

"His decision not to take this job was career-changing for me," said Southgate.

"I don't know Martin too well but his results at previous clubs have been outstanding."

Southgate's admiration for O'Neill is in stark contrast to his current opinion of the LMA.

The LMA opposed Boro's bid for him to be given dispensation to take charge until the end of the season by which time he'll be on the verge of completing his A licence and enrolling on the Pro-Licence course.

"I spoke to the LMA and they said their opposition wasn't personal but they continued to hammer me in public," added Southgate.

Lack

With the Premier League ratifying his appointment earlier this week despite League Managers' Association objections concerning his lack of coaching qualifications, Southgate heads for Villa Park without the air of uncertainty which has hung over him.

But the former England international admits he might still be playing had

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Coca-Cola CHAMPIONSHIP

TEAM TALK

BARNESLEY v IPSWICH

NEW loan signings Ronnie Wallwork, Kyel Reid, Grant McCann and Leon Knight go straight into Barnsley's squad. IPSWICH may have injury victim Shane Supple in goal after Wigan recalled Mike Pollitt. Lewis Price has a fractured rib. LAST SEASON: No corresponding fixture. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Barnsley 1, Ipswich 1, WDWLW REFEREE: E Ilerton (Tyne & Wear).

BURNLEY v BIRMINGHAM

FRANK SINCLAIR is suspended for Burnley and there is a question mark over fellow defender Jon Harley. BIRMINGHAM defender Matthew Upson could make his first appearance of the season after ankle, Achilles and groin problems. LAST SEASON: No corresponding fixture. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Burnley 1, WDWLW, B'ham 1, WWWWD REFEREE: K Wright (Cambridgeshire).

COLCHESTER v SOUTHEND

COLCHESTER'S Kevin Watson returns from a calf injury while new boy Hogan Ephraim goes into the squad. ADAM BARRETT and Lee Bradbury came through a reserves match unscathed. Billy Paynter (hamstring) is likely to be the only absentee. LAST SEASON: No corresponding fixture. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Colchester 1, WDWLW, Southend 1, LLLDD REFEREE: S Bennett (Kent).

DERBY v LEICESTER

DEFENDER Michael Johnson (hamstring) returns, but Paul Pescisolido (thigh) may not play. PADDY McCARTHY returns from a ban to captain City. Andy Johnson (ankle), James Wesolowski and Gareth Williams (ankle) are out. LAST SEASON: Leicester 2, Derby 2, Derby 1, Leicester 1. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Derby 1, DWWW; Leicester 1, DWLWL REFEREE: A D'Urso (Essex).

NORWICH v HULL

NORWICH forward Ian Henderson is not ready to return from knee ligament trouble. Luke Chadwick and Lee Croft are also sidelined with knee and ankle problems respectively. ASIDE from striker Jon Parkin's absence (ankle), Hull could boast an otherwise fully-fit squad. LAST SEASON: Hull 1, Norwich 1, Norwich 2, Hull 1. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Norwich 1, LDWLL; Hull 1, LWDLW REFEREE: G Sutton (Lincolnshire).

PLYMOUTH v LEEDS

DEFENDER Mat Doumbe (knee) remains Plymouth's only injury doubt. Hasney Aljoofree, who has recovered from a broken nose and shin injury, will start. ON-LOAN Ugo Ehiogu and Trevor Kandol should go straight into Leeds' squad. LAST SEASON: Leeds 0, Plymouth 0, Plymouth 0, Leeds 3. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Plymouth 1, WDLDD; Leeds 1, WLLWL REFEREE: D Whitestone (Northamptonshire).

PRESTON v C PALACE

PRESTON'S Callum Davidson (groin) is back in training, but fellow defender Youl Mawene (knee) is still in the treatment room. PALACE hope they will have Michael Hughes back from a thigh strain. Leon Cort has still not recovered from a hamstring injury. LAST SEASON: Preston 2, Palace 0, Palace 1, Preston 1. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Preston 1, LWWWD, Crystal Palace 1, LLLW REFEREE: U Rennie (S Yorkshire).



HUGHES: Return

QPR v COVENTRY

QPR are without Gareth Ainsworth (ankle). Forward Dexter Blackstock (hamstring) is available. ON-LOAN Darren Currie provides cover for Don Hutchison (ankle). Richard Duffy and Clive Clarke remain available after extending their loan spells. LAST SEASON: QPR 0, Coventry 1, Coventry 3, QPR 0. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: QPR 0, Coventry 1, Coventry 3, QPR 0. REFEREE: C Penton (Sussex).

SHEFF WED v CARDIFF

ON-LOAN Wayne Andrews will go into Wednesday's squad as cover for suspended Wade Small, who starts a ban. CARDIFF boss Dave Jones faces a selection dilemma after signing full-back Alan Wright on loan from Sheffield United. LAST SEASON: Cardiff 1, Sheff Wed 0, Sheff Wed 1, Cardiff 3. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Sheff Wed 1, DWWLW; Cardiff 1, DWLWL REFEREE: P Dowd (Staffordshire).

SOUTHAMPTON v LUTON

SAINTS trio Gareth Bale (ankle), Inigo Idiakie (thigh) and Kenwyne Jones (ankle) face late fitness checks. STRUGGLING Luton will be without suspended top scorer Rowan Vine, while fellow forward Sam Parkin is a long-term casualty with an ankle injury. LAST SEASON: Southampton 1, Luton 0, Luton 3, Southampton 2. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Soton 1, LWDDW; Luton 1, LLLLW REFEREE: P Armstrong (Berkshire).

STOKE v WEST BROM

STOKE boss Tony Pulis has no new injury worries, but will still be without suspended Ricardo Fuller and Dave Brammer. WEST BROM boss Tony Mowbray has Zoltan Gera (calf) fit again, while Jonathan Greening is ready for a return after a ban. LAST SEASON: No corresponding fixture. LAST FIVE LEAGUE MATCHES: Stoke 1, LWDDW; Luton 1, LLLLW REFEREE: M Thorpe (Suffolk).

SERIOUSLY football

Marcus has a point to TRAINING

■ by RALPH ELLIS

MARCUS HAHNEMANN reckons three years of doing little but training at Fulham is the secret behind his new-found Premiership success.

And Reading's giant American goalkeeper will return to Craven Cottage today saying his own Thanksgiving prayer for the lessons that helped launch his career.

For the work ethic that is helping him hit the heights all comes from when he was trying to convince two different Fulham bosses to give him more than just four first-team games in three seasons.

Hahnemann, 34, now giving boss Steve Coppell the benefit of his hard work, recalled: "It was a tough time.

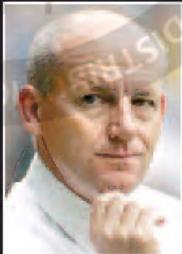
Filled

"I had come over from Colorado Rapids in 1999 for an £80,000 fee full of ambition and first Kevin Bracewell then Jean Tigana wouldn't pick me.

"I filled my time by playing golf.

"There was a driving range next to Fulham's training ground and I'd go over there and try to take out my feelings by whacking the ball for 300 yards.

"It was a difficult time, and I can remember saying to my mother-in-law, who is an elementary school counsellor, just



COPPEL: Benefiting

how frustrating it was. She said 'So you are feeling sorry for yourself.'

"It kind of made me realise that if you say that it's the same as feeling sorry for yourself and you sound like a little baby.

"So I said 'Okay, so I'm not playing. I can't do anything about that. All I can do is play a hell of a

League 1 TEAM TALK

BRADFORD v BOURNEMOUTH

RICHARD EDGHILL (hip) and Ben Parker (hamstring) both return to Bradford's squad. BOURNEMOUTH'S Darren Anderton (groin) misses out. On-loan Simon Gillett and Matthew Connolly could start.

CARLISLE v PORT VALE

IPSWICH rookie James Krause is in line to make his Carlisle debut and Kevin Harper (dead leg) should feature. VALE hand a debut to on-loan Clayton Fortune, with Colin Mile and Jason Talbot out.

DONCASTER v BRIGHTON

NEIL SULLIVAN will go straight into Doncaster's squad and Steve Roberts (facial injury) should feature. BRIGHTON'S on-loan striker Dean Bowditch (groin) is struggling but Georges Santos (ankle) is pushing for inclusion.

GILLINGHAM v ROTHERHAM

GILLINGHAM'S Leon Johnson (knee) is fit to take on the Millers, but will be on the bench and Alan Pouton is hoping for a recall. ROTHERHAM miss Lee Williamson (toe) and Michael Keane (hamstring), but Colin Murdock (hip) is in contention for the trip to Priestfield.

CREWE v CHESTERFIELD

CREWE are set to have an unchanged line-up, but illness could see Tony Grant lose his place on the bench.

CALEB FOLAN is suspended for Chesterfield and Phil Picken (knee) is in contention for a start.

HUDDERSFIELD v OLDHAM

MARTIN MCINTOSH (groin), Jon Worthington and Andy Holdsworth (bans) will return. OLDHAM ATHLETIC'S Simon Charlton (hamstring) is doubtful to face his hometown club, but Neil Eardley could feature after knee trouble.

SWANSEA v BRISTOL CITY

TOMORROW, 1.30pm SWANSEA will hand loan star Ian Craney his debut. Tom Williams (hernia) is out. CITY duo Scott Brown and David Noble (both hamstring) both missed last week's home win over Gillingham, but could play a part.

NORTHAMPTON v L ORIENT

JASON CROWE is suspended and Chris Doig (ankle) is a major injury doubt for Northampton, but Andy Kirk (ankle) could return. LUKE GUTTRIDGE and James Walker could make their Orient debuts.

NOTTM FOREST v MILLWALL

FOREST stars Nathan Tyson (knee) and Junior Agogo (stomach) and John Curtis (groin) should feature. MILLWALL forward Chris Zebroski is suspended and Tony Craig, Mark Phillips, Jody Morris and Tom Brighton are out.

YEOVIL v SCUNTHORPE

YEOVIL'S Terry Skiverton, Paul Terry and Arron Davies are all facing a race to be fit but Scott Guyett is suspended. DEFENDER Andy Crosby (hamstring) is expected to be fit for Scunthorpe but Ian Morris (knee) is out.

SWANSEA v BRISTOL CITY

TOMORROW, 1.30pm SWANSEA will hand loan star Ian Craney his debut. Tom Williams (hernia) is out. CITY duo Scott Brown and David Noble (both hamstring) both missed last week's home win over Gillingham, but could play a part.

prove after his Fulham misery

MADE ME A TOP MANN

lot of golf and train hard". "For a goalkeeper, when you are not in the team, it's probably the hardest job there is in any club.

"You have to prepare yourself like you are going to play, because if the other guy gets injured or sent off in the first minute you have to be ready to go on.

Honest

"But that means psychologically it is difficult because not only do you have to do that for the first team but you play all the reserve games."

Hahemann added: "If you are playing all the time, you get your enjoyment from games. When you are not it has to come from training, so I learned to train really hard."

"I'm looking forward to going back to Fulham. I've had a few texts telling me how many they are going to score past me!"

Coppell? I used to hate him

CHRIS COLEMAN has hailed Steve Coppell as one of football's great guys – but admitted there was a time when he could not stand his old boss.

The duo square up as rival managers today but when Coppell took the Wales international to Crystal Palace as a defender in the 1990s he promptly infuriated him by trying to turn him into a centre-forward.

Coleman said: "I probably played 30 games as a striker in the Premiership. I hated it and I hated him for putting me up there. I was in his office every week.

Honest

"First I played with Mark Bright and then Chris Armstrong and it was a bit difficult for me to follow the Ian Wright-Mark Bright partnership. I did get a few goals though. I think I got eight – all with my head."

"He's a great guy, Steve. I like him and respect him a lot. He has done a fantastic job there. He is an honest and intelligent

man on and off the pitch and he keeps everything simple."

Coppell also has a reputation for being one of the least excitable managers but with Fulham boss Coleman recalled that during their Palace days tempers were lost on a regular basis.

He said: "I saw him lose his temper many times but never for the sake of it. He was always calm and spoke very well."

"There were fights in training all the time but that was good because it meant there was a lot of passion and emotion."

"He let the lads work it out for themselves. He always seemed to know when to back off or when to be in the middle of it."

GRIMSBY v ACCRINGTON S

GRIMSBY'S Tom Newey (ban) is back but Gary Cohen, Michael Reddy and Isaiah Rankin are out. STANLEY loanees David Mannix, Adam Dugdale, Joe Jacobson and Curtis McDonald could make their debuts.

HARTLEPOOL v WYCOMBE

HARTLEPOOL defender Darren Williams (hamstring) is out, but new loan signing Andy Monkhouse is in contention. WYCOMBE have Anthony Grant (ban) available but Scott Golbourne has returned to Reading.

BOSTON UTD v HEREFORD

BOSTON hand on-loan Darlington man David Rowson his debut. Brad Maylett and David Galbraith are fit.

HEREFORD will make a late decision on Stuart Fleetwood (ankle and viral infection).

DARLINGTON v MK DONS

DARLINGTON loan signings Mark Albrighton and Anthony Griffith could feature. MK DONS loan-signing Paul Butler will make his debut, Lee Harper is available but Sean O'Hanlon is doubtful.

PETERBOROUGH v TORQUAY

LOANEES Ben Turner and Craig Morgan will be added to the Peterborough squad but Liam Davis (shin) is sidelined. TORQUAY wait on the fitness of left back Steven Angus (knee) but Craig Taylor (back) is ruled out.

ROCHDALE v MANSFIELD

ROCHDALE could hand loan signing William Mocquet a debut and John Doolan and Clive Moyo-Modise are fit. MANSFIELD could have a full squad available although Stephen Dawson (back) is struggling.

SHREWSBURY v CHESTER

SHREWSBURY'S Rich Hope (calf) is a doubt but Ryan Esson (broken cheekbone) is still sidelined. CHESTER are without Roberto Martinez and Ashley Westwood who are banned, while Ryan Sempie has joined from Lincoln.

STOCKPORT v MACCLESFIELD

STOCKPORT'S Rob Clare (calf) is doubtful and Gareth Owen is still out. PORTSMOUTH keeper Asmir Begovic goes into the Macclesfield squad and Rob Scott is available, but David Morley and John Murphy are doubts.

SWINDON v BURY

SWINDON will be without Paul Evans and Michael Pook (both knee) but on-loan Michael Timlin could feature. BURY can call on loan signings Matt Binkhorn, Stephen Turnbull and Andy Warrington.

WALSALL v NOTTS COUNTY

WALSALL'S Chris Westwood (hamstring) is expected to return and Tommy Wright could make a debut but Anthony Gerrard and Craig Pead are out. COUNTY'S Tom Curtis (foot) is not ready and Steve Hunt is still on the sidelines.

WREXHAM v LINCOLN CITY

WREXHAM are without Neil Roberts, Lee McEvilly, Juan Ugarte and Tom Craddock. LINCOLN should hand debuts to Matt Birley and Shane Nicholson. Scott Kerr, Ollie Ryan and Jeff Hughes are out.

BRISTOL ROV v BARNET

TOMORROW, 3pm ROVERS midfielder Ryan Green and captain Stuart Campbell have received treatment this week but should be fit. BARNET are expected to give Adam Birchall a debut after his loan move from Mansfield.

TABLES

Barclays Premiership

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	13	11	2	29	13	34
Chelsea	13	10	1	23	7	31
Portsmouth	13	7	2	4	19	22
Aston Villa	13	7	3	21	10	22
Bolton	13	8	3	4	12	21
Sheffield Utd	13	7	4	15	9	20
Reading	13	6	1	15	8	19
Wigan	12	5	3	4	16	19
Leeds	13	6	2	10	11	18
Fulham	13	4	5	14	19	17
Man City	13	4	4	5	10	16
West Ham	13	4	3	6	10	14
Blackburn	13	3	6	11	17	13
Wolverhampton	13	2	4	7	8	10
Newcastle	13	2	4	7	8	10
Sheff Utd	13	2	4	7	8	10
West Brom	13	2	2	9	9	8
Charlton	13	2	2	9	9	8

Coca-Cola Championship

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	18	10	8	29	13	34
Preston	18	10	6	2	30	36
Birmingham	18	10	5	24	16	34
Sheffield	18	9	4	5	28	23
Derby	18	8	4	5	26	21
West Brom	18	8	5	5	31	29
Wigan	18	8	5	5	31	29
Stoke	18	7	6	5	25	27
Shpton	18	7	6	5	24	18
Leeds	18	7	6	5	25	20
Coventry	18	8	1	9	18	25
Norwich	18	7	4	2	34	25
Leeds United	18	7	3	6	25	24
Colchester	18	7	3	8	25	24
QPR	18	6	6	6	30	24
Southend	18	6	5	7	21	22
Sheff Wed	18	6	5	7	21	22
Leicester	18	5	7	8	18	20
Wigan	18	5	6	9	22	16
Crystal Palace	18	6	3	9	21	21
Hull	18	4	4	10	14	23
Bolton	18	4	4	10	14	23
Barnsley	18	3	4	11	22	16
Southend	18	2	6	10	20	15

Coca-Cola League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottingham Forest	18	11	5	2	23	11	38
Thame	18	10	5	3	21	13	35
Scunthorpe	18	9	5	4	27	14	32
Bristol City	18	10	4	4	26	15	32
Walsall	18	9	3	6	25	20	32
Swanside	18	9	3	6	26	20	30
Oldham	18	8	5	5	25	16	29
Grimsby	18	8	5	5	25	16	29
Crewe	18	8	2	8	34	31	24
Blackpool	18	7	6	2	21	25	23
Hereford	18	7	5	6	24	27	22
Brighton	18	7	3	8	27	24	22
Gillingham	18	7	3	8	28	32	24
Brentford	18	6	3	8	16	31	17
Bournemouth	18	5	3	9	20	36	15
Bolton	18	3	6	9	20	34	5
Leiston Orient	18	0	2	8	21	22	2
Hartlepool	18	5	7	7	22	23	22
Shrewsbury	17	5	7	5	24	17	21
Cheltenham	18	4	6	7	23	19	20
Millwall	18	4	5	9	17	28	17
Brentford	18	3	8	8	16	31	17
Bolton	18	3	8	8	16	31	17
Portsmouth	18	3	8	9	16	32	17
Grimsby	18	4	6	8	14	20	18
Bolton	18	4	6	10	23	33	19
MacClesfield	18	4	4	10	23	33	16
Walsall	18	4	4	10	23	33	16

Coca-Cola League Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	18	12	1	3	30	8	41
Lincoln City	18	11	2	5	29	13	34
Shrewsbury	18	10	4	4	23	13	34
Wycombe	18	10	4	4	23	13	34
MK Dons	18	10	3	5	30	24	33
Nottingham Forest	18	10	3	5	29	24	33
Yeovil	18	9	4	5	27	24	31
Peterborough	18	9	4	5	27	24	31
Derby	18	7	6	5	25	22	27
Bury	18	7	6	5	25	22	27
Hartlepool	18	8	2	8	22	22	26
Stockport	18	7	4	7	21	21	25
Grimsby	18	6	5	7	22	23	22
Shrewsbury	17	5	7	5	24	17	22
Mansfield	18	5	6	7	26	28	21
Barnet	18	5	6	7	26	32	21
Albion R	18	5	6	7	26	32	21
Wrexham	18	4	2	8	17	27	19
Torquay	18	4	6	8	14	20	18
Portsmouth	18	4	6	8	14	20	18
Grimsby	18	4	6	9	16	32	17
Bolton	18	4	6	10	23	33	16
MacClesfield	18	4	4	10	23	33	16

Nationwide Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oxford Utd	19	13	1	1	25	14	34
Chelsea	19	13	1	3	44	19	42
Weymouth	19	10	4	5	23	18	34
Gravesend	19	9	6	7	27	23	32
Macclesfield	19	9	5	5	24	31	32
Morecambe	19	9	5	5	24	31	32
Exeter	19	7	9	1	28	19	30
Grays Athletic	19	7	5	7	32	20	26
Aldershot	19	7	5	7	29	26	26
Portsmouth R	19	7	4	8	24	24	27
Woking	19	7	4	8	24	24	27
Northwich	19	8	10	3	25	33	25
Warrington	19	7	4	8	24	27	25
Halifax	19	6	4	9	24	27	22
Forest Green	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Reading	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Wrexham	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Charlton	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Exeter	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Bank of Scotland	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Scottish First Division	19	6	4	9	23	30	21
Celtic	19	13	1	1	31	10	40
Rangers	19	7	4	5	23	16	25
Hibernian	19	6	4	5	28	16	22
Hearts	19	6	4	5	21	16	22
Alloa	19	6	4	5	21	16	22
Stranraer	19	5	7	4</td			

BARCLAYS PREMIERSHIP

TEAM TALK

Aston Villa v Middlesbrough

VILLA striker Chris Sutton (calf) is a doubt so Milan Baros stands by. Midfielders Gavin McCann and Stiliyan Petrov are available after missing the draw at Wigan. Defender Aaron Hughes has recovered from a groin problem. ENGLAND winger Stewart Downing is rated 50-50 due to the groin problem which kept him out of Boro's 0-0 draw with Liverpool. George Boateng should make it after limping off and Andrew Dowie (ankle) is expected to be fit. Last season: Aston Villa 2 Middlesbrough 3. Referee: P Walton.

Bolton v Arsenal (5.15)

SKIPPER Kevin Nolan returns to the Bolton squad after missing last weekend's defeat at Everton to attend the birth of his first child. Quinton Fortune is also available after a recent groin injury.

THIERRY HENRY has been ruled out for Arsenal because of neck injury. Fellow forward Robin van Persie is suspended following a fifth yellow card of the season against Liverpool. Tomas Rosicky (hamstring) and defender William Gallas (thigh) are will not be available. Last season: Bolton 2 Arsenal 0. Referee: M Dean.

Charlton v Everton (12.45)

CHARLTON look set to again be without striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink. Full-back Djimi Traore is in contention after his recovery from a broken leg and midfielder Amady Faye returns from suspension, but defender Souleymane Diawara (hamstring) remains a doubt.

EVERTON will have James McFadden back from a two-match suspension and manager David Moyes can pair either him or James Beattie with Andy Johnson in attack. Simon Davies is back from a thigh injury. Last season: Charlton 0 Everton 0. Referee: A Wiley.

Fulham v Reading

MIDFIELDER Michael Brown is close to a recall to the Fulham starting line-up after a stint on the sidelines with an ankle injury. Papa Bouba Diop is a slight doubt with a thigh problem. Midfielder Simon Elliott is set to miss up to four months after an Achilles problem was diagnosed. READING have no new injury worries after winger Glen Little shrugged off the foot problem that forced him to miss training earlier in the week. Last season: No corresponding fixture. Referee: D Gallagher.

Liverpool v Man City

RAFA BENITEZ expects to have Craig Bellamy in his squad. The Wales striker is involved in a court case in Cardiff but Liverpool boss Benitez is blighted by a catalogue of injury problems that needs the player.

DIETMAR HAMANN is back in Manchester City's squad. He has finally recovered from a thigh injury that has kept him out for over a month, although the best the German can probably hope for is a place on the bench. Last season: Liverpool 1 Man City 0. Referee: R Styles.

West Ham v Sheffield Utd

BOSS Alan Pardew has no new injury worries. Rio Ferdinand had been a doubt after picking up a minor foot injury in Tuesday's Champions League defeat at Celtic, but has been passed fit and will take his place in what could be an unchanged line-up.

SHEFFIELD UNITED defender Leigh Bromby, who has missed the last four weeks with a hamstring strain, could step into the squad as David Sommell is out with an ankle problem. Jason Webber (hamstring), Michael Tonge (ankle) and Chris Armstrong (knee) are all still out. Last season: Man Utd 1 Chelsea 0. Referee: M Halsey.

TOMORROW

Man Utd v Chelsea (4)

SIR ALEX FERGUSON has no fresh injury worries. Rio Ferdinand had been a doubt after picking up a minor foot injury in Tuesday's Champions League defeat at Celtic, but has been passed fit and will take his place in what could be an unchanged line-up.

CHELSEA should have Michael Ballack (calf) and Didier Drogba (ankle) fit. Frank Lampard will return to the squad after missing the Werder Bremen game through suspension. Last season: Man Utd 1 Chelsea 0. Referee: H Webb.

Newcastle v Portsm'th (1.30)

KIERON DYER, Obafemi Martins and Scott Parker are set to return for Newcastle. Nicky Butt and Emre should shake off knocks and Giuseppe Rossi is available after being ineligible for the UEFA Cup.

GARY O'NEIL (thigh) and Benjani (knee) are fit to return to the Portsmouth squad. But Matt Taylor (virus) is still a doubt and Dejan Stefanovic will continue at left-back. Andy Cole has an Achilles injury and could be out for a few weeks. Last season: Newcastle 2 Portsmouth 0. Referee: M Riley.

Tottenham v Wigan

JERMAINE JENAS has a calf injury and is a concern for Tottenham. Aaron Lennon, Pascal Chimbonda and Teemu Tainio made comebacks from injury in the UEFA Cup win against Bayer Leverkusen and they could feature at White Hart Lane against the Latics.

WIGAN striker Enda Stevens is again a doubt after missing the last three weeks with a calf injury, and although back in training, is still not 100 per cent fit. Last season: Tottenham 2 Wigan 2. Referee: M Clattenburg.

Kanu has heart of gold

■ by PETER WHITE

PORSCMOUTH striker Kanu steps out at St James's Park tomorrow - 10 years on from the day he was told he would never play football again.

The Nigerian ace's world fell apart when a routine medical check revealed a serious heart condition.

As a 20-year-old he had just completed a dream move from Ajax to Inter Milan, having won a gold medal at the Atlanta Olympic Games for his country and a Champions League medal with the Dutch outfit.

Then came the devastating news that has been etched in his mind ever since. "It is a date I will never forget," he says.

But Kanu never stopped praying and believing that he

could defy the odds. A decade on, the gangly striker has rediscovered the form that made him such a popular figure in more than 200 games for Arsenal.

A free signing from West Brom in the summer, he has emerged as one of the key figures in Pompey's exceptional start to the season.

Faulty

And his eight goals have made him the Premiership's joint-leading scorer, alongside Chelsea's Didier Drogba.

Yet in the autumn of 1996 he was diagnosed as having a faulty aortic valve which opened normally but did not close properly, causing a leak. It

was a life-threatening condition and, according to Kanu, Italian doctors shook their heads and insisted his career was over.

He recalled: "It was just a normal check-up that found it but it came as a huge shock because it was the Olympics, even though it had been really hot, I did not have a problem.

"One minute you feel totally healthy, the next you are told your career is over."

When all seemed lost, specialists in the US said they could fix the problem and told Kanu there was a good chance he could resume his career.

The operation was a complete success, allowing him to carry on with Inter before making a £4.5m move to Arsenal in January 1999.



FIGHTER: Kanu is back to his best

SERIOUSLY football

Luque spells it out for Roeder

PLAY ME OR I'M OFF

■ by IAN MURTAGH

IMPATIENT Albert Luque last night warned Newcastle boss Glenn Roeder: Pick me or I'm out of here.

The Spaniard played the entire 90 minutes in the Toon's 2-1 UEFA Cup win against Celta Vigo - only his fourth start this term - and he has urged Roeder to stick with him for tomorrow's clash at home to Portsmouth.

Luque even hinted he'd demand a move if he's still scratching around for first-team football when the transfer window re-opens in the New Year. "I've waited a year and a half but there's been no change in my situation," he said.

"I need to be playing regularly and will wait another month and there must be a change by then.

"I've had 20 minutes in one game, maybe 30 in another, but I have not had a real run of games to get properly match fit.

"It has been very difficult for me and, if it is still the same, then it may be better both for Newcastle and me for me to go."

With Damien Duff ruled out for up to six weeks following surgery, Luque has told his manager he's just the man to occupy the left-wing slot.

Roeder: Ultimatum

that, with Oba Martins and Kieron Dyer set to start tomorrow, he'll be one of those who make way.

The Geordies are without a league win in eight games and haven't beaten Premiership opposition on home soil since the opening day of the season.

Keeper Shay Given accepts the slump needs to be arrested quickly.

Battle

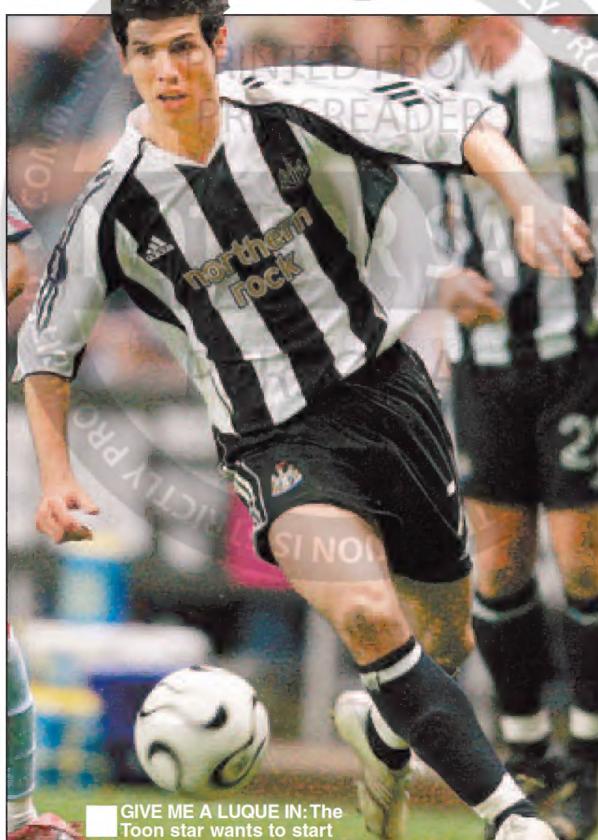
"We are definitely in a relegation battle," said the Irishman.

"We are fourth bottom so if you don't realise you are in a relegation fight there is something badly wrong."

"We have started off very poorly in the league and badly need a win."

"Portsmouth are flying but it's all about us."

"We've got to start the game with a high tempo and really get at them."



GIVE ME A LUQUE IN: The Toon star wants to start

It's Egg pie 'n mash

■ by PAUL BROWN

EGGERT Magnusson has been told to expect a traditional East End welcome after completing his £108m takeover of West Ham.

The club's new Icelandic owner will swap pickled herring for pie and mash as he takes in his first match at Upton Park today, against Sheffield United.

The 59-year-old, who met the team for the first time yesterday, will also get a game - with manager Alan Pardew and the staff in training.

Stomach

Pardew said: "I will be inviting him to have a kick-around."

"He tells me that he plays football three times a week and you can see that he is a sprightly character."

"He is certainly enthusiastic about what is in store for him."

"He has been enthused by what he has found."

"I think he will get the traditional East End welcome, but I don't know if he will stomach the pies and mash afterwards!"

"Our fans will be particularly overjoyed that he is a football person coming in here, with the traditions that we have. He has said all the right things."

**SERIOUSLY
football**

Blades boss in threat to Hammer rival



SLAPPER:
Warnock has threatened to smack Pardew if there's a repeat of his antics against Arsenal

WARNO'S A WHACKO

MADCAP Neil Warnock has threatened to whack Alan Pardew if the West Ham boss repeats the goal celebrations that led to his infamous spat with Arsene Wenger.

Pardew and Wenger found themselves in a shoving match after the Hammers boss taunted his Arsenal rival following his side's late winner at Upton Park on Bonfire Night.

Both have been charged by the FA with improper conduct and Pardew knows he could be hit with a hefty fine and touchline ban if found guilty at a hearing.

But according to Warnock, Pardew could also feel the full force of his rage if he adopts the same approach with the Blades boss when the two sides meet at Upton Park today.

The duo have not always seen eye-to-eye as a result of a bust-up when Pardew was at Reading and both were Championship rivals. They fell out following a game at Bramall Lane, when Pardew refused to shake

■ by JEREMY CROSS

Warnock's hand at the final whistle and stormed on to the team bus.

Warnock insists they are now big mates again after making-up and burying the hatchet. He said: "We had a few words a while ago, but we get on very well now."

"Alan is someone who I respect and when we go to London for games he always lets us use their training ground."

Chin

"Mind you, if he celebrates like that against us I will chin him!"

"But I'd probably do it down the tunnel where no-one can see - I'm a lot more experienced about these things now."

Warnock is known for losing his cool on the touchline himself but he thinks Pardew is the one who should be learning to chill out.

He added: "I've told Alan the needs to calm down on the touchline! I can't understand these volatile managers."



SPARK: Pardew's celebration

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wooly's world

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Scho's out of place

MANCHESTER United's Paul Scholes says he was tempted by England coach Steve McClaren's determined bid to persuade him to return to international football.

This begs the question, where would Scholes have played for England?

McClaren has a big enough problem sorting out his midfield to also bring Scholes back.

With Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard still trying to play together, Owen Hargreaves a first choice when fit, Aaron Lennon an emerging talent and Joe Cole impressive, where would Scholes play?

■ LOTS of questions this week. Why did United captain Gary Neville allow Louis Saha to take that penalty at Celtic if he knew the striker's head was all over the place? **■** And why, away from home in Europe, do United use a 4-3-3 formation with Wayne Rooney wide on the left? A waste of talent.

Don't be bad Egg

LOTS of promises from West Ham's new Icelandic owner Egert Magnusson.

He says Alan Pardew's job is safe and that there will be no upheaval at Upton Park, just plenty of investment.

I just hope he is true to his word.

And that he allows West Ham to maintain their traditions and East End values and not turn them into a money-making machine.



COCK-A-HOOP:
Shunsuke Nakamura
celebrates his Celtic
winner against United

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Show us a little respect please

IS it too much to ask the Manchester United and Chelsea players to set the right example in their highly-explosive clash at Old Trafford tomorrow?

Yes, there is so much at stake.

Pride, possibly the outcome of the Premiership and the battle to boast "we are the biggest club in the country."

More significantly, however, at stake is their ability to prove top players – and the two

managers – can get through 90 minutes with respect for the officials.

This season has been an ugly catalogue of dissent, confrontation, cheating, diving, managers abusing and criticising the referee and touchline bitterness.

If football is not careful feuding players will scare off referees. In the end there will be none to try to control their spite.

So, come on United and Chelsea, behave and entertain, please.

I LOST count of the number of Celtic fans who collared me in Glasgow this week.

"What about that Wooly, fantastic wasn't it? Great game, great result."

Actually no, it was a poor game, poor standard and a shadow of what we expected from the so-called Battle of Britain.

Arrogant Manchester United had only themselves to blame for losing while Celtic, at times, lacked real belief they could win the much-anticipated Champions League tie.

The fact they did allowed their fans – celebrating qualification for the last 16 of the Champions League – to ask the ongoing question: "Where would we finish in the Premiership?"

And, after that: "Are we as good as your so-called big lot in the south?"

Sorry guys, again the answer is negative. Celtic is a big club in Scotland. In England, you would be a side bidding to get into the UEFA Cup.

You would be on the same level as the

English clubs currently enjoying success in Europe's second-rate competition – Blackburn, Spurs and Newcastle.

You are the Aston Villa of Scotland. Now, there is a similarity, with the common denominator Martin O'Neill.

The former Bhoys manager is enjoying success on his return to the job, proving himself a top manager by getting the best out of the Villa players who had grown disillusioned under David O'Leary.

O'Neill, however, knows that without top players Villa's level will remain around the UEFA, League and FA Cup.

Quality

At Celtic he fell just short – as Gordon Strachan will do – because of the lack of real quality when it comes to winning the Champions League or, yes, the Premiership.

If Celtic were allowed to play in English football, which I believe they should, we could end once and for all the debate about how good they really are.

At the moment I'd say Celtic would finish around 10th. Also, sorry Celtic fans, had Tuesday been a sudden death battle with United, I don't think you would have still been celebrating on Wednesday morning.

It'll be boo Peter

CHELSEA chief executive Peter Kenyon says he expects them one day soon to take over from Manchester United as the biggest club in the world.

That should guarantee Kenyon a good reception when he takes his place in the directors' box at Old Trafford tomorrow afternoon.

Kenyon is still looked upon as a pariah at United for walking out and taking up a similar post at Stamford Bridge.

PLONKER OF THE WEEK

STEVE HARMISON for that quite dreadful, inept and confidence-shattering first delivery of the Ashes that ended up at second slip.

Add to that England admitting they were racked with nerves before the first day and you have the already doom and gloom picture of the bid to retain the Ashes. After Harmison's

shocking opening, no one was surprised by the goings on Down Under. As I said on Wednesday, the first ball, first hour, first day is vital.

England just rolled over. Harmison gave the Aussies a lift and sent out the message to the fans propping open their eyes at home: 'Oh, not again.'

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SERIOUSLY
Football

Benitez demands more from skipper

I'LL MAKE
GERRO A
RIGHT
HERO

RAFA BENITEZ admits he is at odds with Steven Gerrard and is demanding more from the Liverpool skipper.

Kop boss Benitez insists he is not picking a fight with the England midfielder but believes Gerrard is selling himself short.

The Spaniard has consistently answered critics who claim that he has played Gerrard out of position on the right of midfield by pointing out that he scored 23 goals in that role last season.

But with Momo Sissoko ruled out, Gerrard has been switched to the centre and bagged the opener against PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday, just his second of the campaign.

Benitez said: "I agree with Gerrard. He is improving. He is playing better."

Best

"But I don't agree in that he is not as close as he thinks to his best level."

"He doesn't know maybe how good he is and I think he can improve."

"This is a positive message, not a negative message."

"I think he can play better because he is really good."

"He can do a lot of things as a top-class player - winning it in the air, scoring goals, creating chances, passing the ball, tackling. Everything."

"The reason I agree with him is that he is improving but I think he can get better because he is really good."

Benitez will make a late

decision on striker Craig Bellamy after the Wales star spent the last two days in a Cardiff court on a charge of assaulting two young women.

Benitez arranged for Bellamy to train with Cardiff while in his home city.

He insisted: "Craig is under consideration. We need to decide if he will be involved or not."

"Maybe it could be good for him to come back and focus on football."

"But maybe what is happening might affect his concentration."

Need

"But I need to decide on the balance of the team."

"We have a lot of injuries and I have explained to him that we might need to use him on the left side of midfield in this game."

"I don't like to use Craig as a winger as he prefers to play as a striker."



RAF 'N READY
Liverpool boss
Rafa Benitez
(above) believes
skipper Steven
Gerrard can be an
even better player

■ by CHRIS HARPER

Pearce could say: "Apart from anything else, victory would put us above Liverpool in the Premiership."

Although Liverpool have already blown their bid to challenge for the title, Pearce is well aware of the formidable task facing his players.

"Their home form is excellent.

The disappointment is their away form in the Premiership, similar to ourselves," he said.

Pearce revealed he and his staff have left no stone unturned in an attempt to earn a precious first three points on away soil.

"We've looked at every aspect of what we do," he added. "We feel the preparation is spot on."

Pearce: I'd love to Kop first win

STUART PEARCE never tasted success at Liverpool in an 18-year playing career with Coventry, Nottingham Forest, Newcastle and West Ham.

So the Manchester City boss had no hesitation in saying: "It would be a real feather in my cap to win there as a manager."

There is one obvious difficulty

■ by BILL THORNTON

facing Pearce and City at Anfield today, they haven't won away from home this season.

In fact, City have won just one away match in 12 months, at Aston Villa last April.

Liverpool's away form is almost as bad, which is why

It's all in
the Pasc
- Jewell

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

exceptionally well for us. He was a cult hero from the first game he played for us but things move on and in Emmerson Boyce we have a very good replacement."

Meanwhile, frustrated Spurs boss Martin Jol has given his strikers a kick up the backside and told them to finish chances or risk finishing him off.

Jol is tearing out what is left of his hair at the number of chances his Tottenham players are chucking away.

The Spurs chief has called on £11m Dimitar Berbatov, Robbie Keane and Jermain Defoe - heading the charts with two league goals - to show that they are not soft touches.

"We've got to score - that's the most important thing," said Jol.

"It doesn't matter who scores but we are making it difficult for ourselves.

"They are all great finishers but it worries me when they are not going in."

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SERIOUSLY
football

Villa boss set to go window shopping

MARTIN'S EURO MISSION

MARTIN O'NEILL is set to hit mega-rich chairman **Randy Lerner** with his January wish list as he attempts to deliver European football at Aston Villa.

American billionaire Lerner will meet Villa boss O'Neill next week and thrash out plans to fund a major New Year spending spree of around £15m.

O'Neill has identified Jermain Defoe, Robbie Keane and James Milner as potential targets for the January transfer window.

Lerner is desperate to bring back European football to Villa Park and is ready to build on O'Neill's impressive reign by assisting him in his revolution.

And while O'Neill is aware that he will face a battle

■ by JOHN PERCY

against his rival Premiership bosses to land his targets he knows that sustaining his dazzling start is vital in helping him succeed.

He said: "The owner is coming over for the Manchester City game on Wednesday and I intend to give him my plan as to how we will look to move forward in the immediate future.

Plan

"My thinking is very much whatever you are going to try and do to strengthen the squad.

"I think the medium-term is obviously to try and get back into European football.

"His [Lerner] plan is to bring in players capable of taking us into European football. We have 22 points

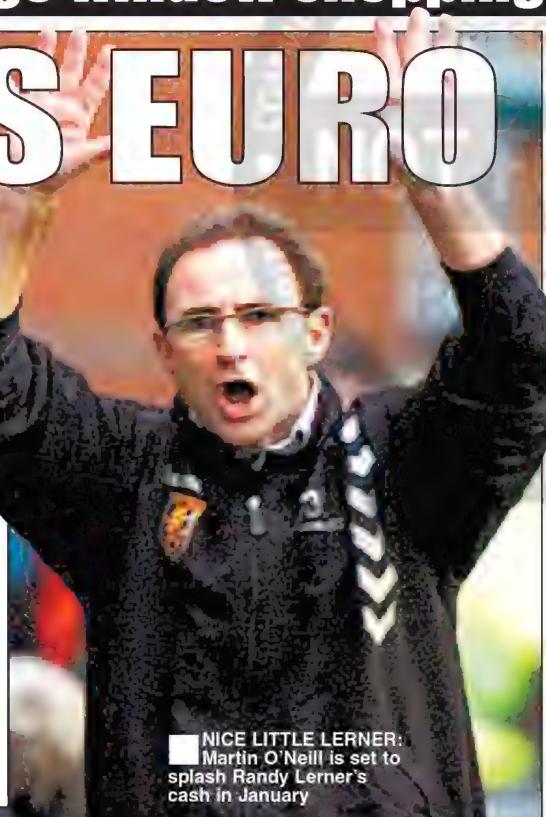
on the board and I think the next couple of weeks will be major to it.

"By January there is a very definite possibility of trying to do something. We have nine games to negotiate between now and then.

"By the time you arrive there, it might all be too late. What we have to do is keep hanging in there."

But the Villa chief has promised he will not fritter away Lerner's cash by being forced into panic buys.

He added: "Players might not be available. If I did buy, it would be a means to an end. I can't imagine myself going and signing someone on a long-term deal that I didn't think was what we were looking for for the next three or four years."



NICE LITTLE LERNER:
Martin O'Neill is set to splash Randy Lerner's cash in January

I'll do a runner
— Beatt

■ by CHRIS HARPER

EVERTON striker James Beattie has struggled with Charlton in his sights as he bids to get his Goodison career back on track.

The £6m star lost his title as Everton's record signing when Andy Johnson arrived in the summer for £2.6m more — and he has lost his place as the club's main striker to his big pal into the bargain.

But an injury to Tim Cahill, who has been used to support Johnson, has handed Beattie another chance.

"Obviously we would like Tim to be fit and scoring goals like he has been doing," Beattie said.

Force

"But when one door closes another one opens, and it is my chance to get a run in the side and hopefully I will start scoring."

He hopes that he and Johnson can now become a powerful attacking force.

Beattie added: "Our friendship has blossomed, and even though our partnership hasn't blossomed I don't think really that it has been given the chance to because the gaffer has preferred to play one up front."

"Hopefully we can now get a run of games together and show what we are really all about."

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SERIOUSLY
football

OLD TRAFFORD SHOWDOWN: Chelsea star hits

FERGIE'S SCARED OF SPREE

■ by BILL THORNTON

MANCHESTER United boss Sir Alex Ferguson is worried Chelsea will go on another spending spree if they lose tomorrow.

Asked how he thought Chelsea would react to going six points adrift, Fergie laughed: "They'll probably go and buy six players in January!"

"First, we have to get ourselves into that position. Certainly, this is a great opportunity for us. In the past two seasons we have relied on other teams doing us a favour by taking points off them.

"This time, we have the chance to do ourselves the big favour. The one thing I think is certain, is that they will be our main challengers and we will be theirs."

With his side in the hunt for their first title since 2003, Fergie said: "It isn't lost on us, that in the past two seasons, Chelsea have gone nine, 10 points clear of us and that has been too difficult to peg back.

"But, this time, we have come out of the blocks quickly and, for the first time when we meet, we are in front of them.

Spirit

"So, we have the prospect of going six points clear and them having to chase us, rather than the other way around.

"This should be a fantastic game, with some great players on the pitch. We have achieved good consistency, which you don't normally get from young players.

"So, there is a great maturity developing and there is a fantastic team spirit, which I think is helping us more than anything."

The United boss is still mulling over whether spot-flop Louis Saha will keep the job tomorrow. "We haven't decided on that yet," he said.

Asked about Saha's state of mind, following his 89th-minute miss against Celtic on Tuesday, Fergie insisted: "He's fine. He's OK."

Ferguson also did not believe Neil Lennon's claim that Gary Neville had told him he thought Saha was about to miss. "No, I think Celtic were high on adrenaline after that win, as they had every right to be," he said.

Ferguson pleaded with both sides to give referee Howard Webb breathing space at Old Trafford tomorrow.

"I hope we don't see players crowding around the referee, as we have at some matches recently," he said. "We want to let him get on with it and give him a chance."

SHEVIT



POINTING TO GLORY: Frank Lampard says mega money buys Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack (left) will do their talking on the pitch

TOP SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	13	11	1	2	29	6	34
Chelsea	13	10	1	2	23	7	31
Portsmouth	13	7	2	4	19	11	23
Arsenal	12	6	4	2	20	7	22
A Villa	13	5	7	1	15	9	22
Bolton	13	6	3	4	12	12	21

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back at taunts from United's Portuguese ace

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FRANK LAMPARD has backed Chelsea's multi-million-pound big guns to ram cheeky Cristiano Ronaldo's taunts back down his throat.

The Blues spent a fortune on Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack this summer – and Ronaldo believes they've made little difference to the champions.

But Lampard claims that is rubbish and backed his two misfiring team-mates to prove the Manchester United winger wrong in tomorrow's showdown at Old Trafford.

Counted

He said: "I think these big games are the ones when you need your big players to stand up and be counted. I think big players thrive on these games.

"I'm sure those two will do because it's the type of player they are. Sheva is a fantastic player and I have untold respect for him.

"I had that before he came and I still have that now. I think he's scored three in his last four or five games, so he's in good form."

"He's come to another country and you have to adapt a bit but he's a fantastic player. He's playing well."

"He and Michael Ballack are world-renowned, top players because they perform in big games. I hope it's the sort of game that will bring the best out of Sheva.

"We've got nothing to prove to anyone,

■ by PAUL BROWN

especially players of the calibre of Ballack and Shevchenko, with what they've done in their careers. They will do their talking on the pitch."

Shevchenko has scored only three times in the Premiership despite costing Chelsea £30m, while Ballack picks up £120,000-a-week in wages but has struggled.

Lampard admits Shevchenko hit rock bottom when he went nine games without a goal earlier this season, but claims the Ukrainian has turned the corner.

He said: "He works hard on the training ground and when he wasn't scoring you could see it hurt him because he's a goalscorer and it has to hurt you."

"That's why he's so good, because he wants to score goals, but he's also a team player and I think he's realised the work-rate that's needed in England.

Taste

"He's working very hard and goals are going to keep coming for him. I think he and Michael have had the taste for where they're playing now."

Ronaldo also claimed Chelsea would fall apart without Jose Mourinho cracking the whip at Stamford Bridge.

But Lampard reckons the same could be said of Sir Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford after all the silverware the Scot has collected in a glittering career.

The Blues star wants Mourinho to stay at Chelsea as long as Ferguson has at United so the Blues can enjoy a similar spell of dominance.

He said: "Of course we want Mourinho to stay for a long time. We love playing under him."

Target

"You have to ask whether United would have been so successful without their manager."

"It has to be our aim to overtake United. They've set the target in terms of results on the pitch and success off the pitch."

"If we win a third title, I'll feel we'll have gone some way towards toppling them – but we would have to be successful over a longer period to say we've done what they've done."

"United have raised their level because I think it's their best start for some



TAUNTS: Ronaldo rapped big-money buys

years. They certainly haven't started this well in the last couple of years. It's important we kick on from here because last Christmas I think we were 10 points clear."

"This season it doesn't look like we will be, so we have to look at it from a different point of view."

"United have raised their level because I think it's their best start for some

confidence and relaxing. When you're a few points behind it's a different pressure. You don't want to fall further behind."

"Things are in place for us to dominate like United did. We have the squad, the manager, the training facilities and the ambition."

"There's no excuses in what we've got in front of us. The rest is up to us to perform on the pitch."

You Blues are havin' a laugh ...

From Back Page

with a jibe about United's attractive style of play. Kenyon admitted it was "critically important to attract people worldwide because a key component is building a fan base."

Ferguson said: "I don't know how you do surveys these days, whether we have 15 million or 50 million fans worldwide."

"The one thing I do know is that we have all these supporters because we do entertain."

"And we will never change from that. That is the great history of this club."

"I can only go off my personal experience and, everywhere I go with the team, there is a mass of people surrounding the players and wearing United strips."

History

"I don't know what the barometer on that is and I don't suppose anyone can be accurate about how many supporters we actually have."

"What I do know is that we have a rich history. I don't think anyone can deny that."

Asked if he thought former United supremo Kenyon's remarks had been deliberately timed three days before the clash between the clubs, Ferguson said: "I don't know. It certainly isn't going to bother me. I know Peter."

"My main concern is that there will be 76,000 in that stadium on Sunday and they'd better shout!"

"When they are fired up they are the best. And they need to be fired up on Sunday because this match is very important for them, too."

Roo's in the top league

From Back Page

Trafford until 2012. The deal catapults Rooney into the top-earner bracket in the Premiership, alongside team-mate Rio Ferdinand and Thierry Henry, at Arsenal, and just behind Chelsea's big earners Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack.

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson had urged club owners, the Glazer family, to recognise Rooney as crucial to United's success over the next few years. The Glazers have done that, giving Rooney a three-year extension to the deal he signed in 2004.

Skiper

The news of his new deal is a massive boost for the player, for the club and for the fans ahead of the clash with Chelsea tomorrow.

Rooney, who has captained United once this season, aims to be the regular skipper.

He has also told team-mates he also believes he can become United's greatest ever player.

It is a tall order, when recalling the likes of Duncan Edwards, George Best, Denis Law, Sir Bobby Charlton and Eric Cantona.

But many people at Old Trafford, Ferguson included, think Rooney can be just that.

Rooney, who was 21 on October 24, signed from Everton two years last August in a £27m deal, a record between British clubs.

TEAMS

UNITED: Van der Sar; Neville, Ferdinand, Vidic, Heinze; Ronaldo, Carrick, Scholes, Giggs; Saha, Rooney.

CHELSEA: Cudicini; Geremi, Carvalho, Terry, A Cole; Makelele, Essien, Lampard, Ballack; Shevchenko, Drogba.

Referee: H. Webb

TV TIMES: Sky Sports 1, 3.30pm, Kick-off: 4pm.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

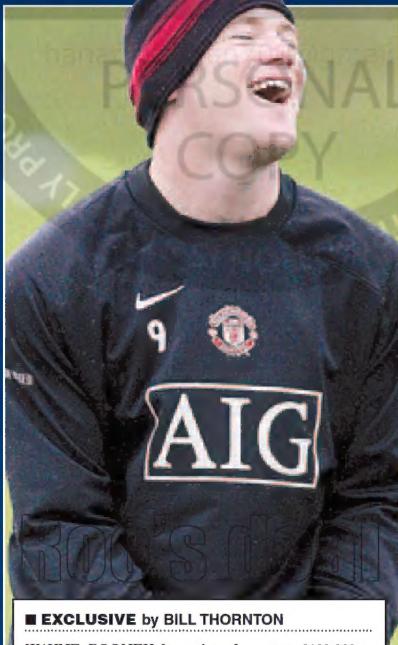
Chelsea have got an impressive Premiership record at Old Trafford:

	Man United	Chelsea
April 17, 1993:	3	Chelsea 0
March 5, 1994:	0	Chelsea 1
April 17, 1995:	0	Chelsea 0
Dec 2, 1995:	1	Chelsea 1
Nov 2, 1996:	1	Chelsea 2
Sept 24, 1997:	2	Chelsea 2
Dec 16, 1998:	1	Chelsea 0
April 24, 2000:	3	Chelsea 2
Sept 23, 2000:	3	Chelsea 3
Dec 1, 2001:	0	Chelsea 3
Jan 18, 2003:	2	Chelsea 1
May 8, 2004:	1	Chelsea 1
May 10, 2005:	1	Chelsea 3
Nov 6, 2005:	1	Chelsea 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Man United	14	5	5	4	19	19
Chelsea	14	4	5	5	19	19



**+PLUS+
MICK FITZ:
I'LL HAVE
A DOUBLE**



■ EXCLUSIVE by BILL THORNTON

WAYNE ROONEY has signed a new, £100,000-a-week contract at Manchester United. The 21-year-old agreed his new deal this week after several months of negotiations and that ties him to Old

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OLD TRAFFORD SHOWDOWN

BIGGER THAN US? YOU'RE HAVING A LAUGH

Fergie scoffs at Chelsea's claims



SIR ALEX FERGUSON has laughed off Peter Kenyon's claim that Chelsea are set to become the biggest club in the world.

"It's a nice time to bring that one out, isn't it?" said the Manchester United boss, whose team face Chelsea at Old Trafford tomorrow.

"As if we are going to quake and tremble at that!" Ferguson, 20 years in charge at

■ by BILL THORNTON

United, has long held the belief that he presides over the world's biggest and best club.

And he was in no mood to concede any ground to Blues chief executive Kenyon as he prepared for tomorrow's "great opportunity".

With Kenyon wanting Jose Mourinho (top right) to make Chelsea "the world's No.1 club by 2014," Ferguson hit back

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